



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

02/16/2012 Minutes

V2020 FISCAL RESOURCES TASK GROUP

Meeting Minutes 2/16/12

ATTENDEES: Gordon Jamieson (Chair), David Garbarino, Heather Remoff, Scott Lever, Joel Rothstein, Pete Howard (Secretary)
 Mtg moved to Hearing Room because Annex was used by the Manager's going away party.

INTRODUCTIONS: Gordon welcomed Scott & Joel. He described Vision 2020 and some of the projects that the FRTG has carried out.

WATER & SEWER QUARTERLY PAYMENTS: Gordon reviewed his proposal to request the BoS to approve a change from semi-annual billing to quarterly billing that would provide a net reduction in the "grace period" from 9 (six months usage, one month bill preparation, two months grace period) to 5 months (three months usage, one month bill preparation, one month grace period). He predicted the adoption of this approach would provide a one time "saving/gain" of one-quarter to one-third of the total annual metered billing component of the W/S Enterprise fund. Using FY13 budget values that would correspond to between \$3m and \$4m.

The group estimated the cost of the extra billing would be between \$50k and \$100k but that additional information would be required to determine the exact cost. Gordon stated that allowing what amounts to a 9 month period from first drop used to payment for that drop is a poor business practice since the Town must cover the water costs (working capital costs) over that at period of time, and that that might require short term borrowing or at least put unnecessary pressure on Town liquid assets.

During active ensuing discussion, the following questions were raised:

.. How much does it actually cost to send out water bills?

.. How often does the MWRA bill the Town?

.. What would be done with the one time savings?

In connection with the last questions several possibilities were suggested:

.. Subsidize the water rates charged for several years.

.. Create a water conservation education program for residents.

.. Apply the automated meters to help residents control water use and find leaks.

.. Perhaps team with plumbers to encourage installation of low flow toilets, etc.

.. Work w/ Vision 2020's Sustainable Arlington to develop such a program.

.. Develop an electronic billing system together with an electronic payment (at no direct cost to the bill payer) system.

.. There would probably be a capital cost involved.

.. There is reason to believe that electronic billing/paying would reduce the manual effort involved thus saving funds eventually.

Scott, supported by David, agreed to write a proposal for presentation to the BoS.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Heather discussed her revised essays for the Advocate. She asked Joel & Scott for comment. Gordon will follow through with Adam Chapdelaine on the request for North Cambridge development payoff.

MY TAX DOLLARS: Gordon will also follow through with Adam to get the FY 12 update installed on the Town's website.

NEXT MEETINGS .. 3rd Thursdays of the month Town Hall Annex